

CONCLUSION

THE STRUCTURE OF THIS BOOK MIGHT BE VIEWED AS AN ESCALATION OF the theme of print from the nitty-gritty of copying, discussed in the first chapter, to print's empyreal form as a "reflection," discussed in the last. Admittedly, this structure stretches the meaning of print to its utmost. Yet, the particular philosophy of history that graphic reproduction harbors is one of the subjects this book has tried to frame.

History performs on many levels in this study. Both Lauro and Kircher are historians in the sense that they inscribe past events and edifices in a narrative, be it Christian-Catholic or politico-dynastic. It would go too far to claim that their reconstructions formulate a theory of history on their own, but what they do is to challenge modern historical thinking and ideas of temporality.

Decoding Lauro's prints has unveiled an ancient Rome that seems to exist beyond archaeology and even beyond antiquity itself. With the aid of calculated mistakes, he maneuvers antiquities into a discourse that was decidedly contemporary. *Antiquae Urbis Splendor* lifts the Roman types up from the academic level of Renaissance treatises and ties them to a religiously and politically turbulent Europe. These deliberately erroneous reconstructions are in fact reactualized as statements in ongoing polemics between Catholics and Protestants, between secular powers battling for the position as the rightful heirs of Rome, and between printmakers themselves, competing for the attention of sponsors who were likely to finance their publications. In Lauro's hand, the monuments

reappear as complex riddles often schematically drawn, but always interesting to decipher. In them resonates a legacy of the antiquarian imagery of Pirro Ligorio, Onofrio Panvinio, and Étienne Dupérac; the genres of emblems as expressed in the illustrated editions of Andrea Alciato; allegories of Federico Zuccaro; and architectural projects, such as the Basilica of S. Peter's, the Villa Borghese in Rome, and various palaces under construction across Europe. Evidence exclusively drawn from the antique, such as coins, epigraphy, and Vitruvius editions, assembled and systematized by earlier generations of antiquarians, was simply not sufficiently rich to be able to grip princes, prelates, and printmakers of the new century. As I have argued, to enable antiquity to continue to convince, and indeed to survive, an amalgam of sources were selected and recombined in a new meaningful whole.

Admittedly, Lauro's reconstructions are often crude and artless in themselves, but the interest lies not in their quality of execution, but in the concept governing their making – the production of non-antiques or, rather, the creation of a parallel antiquity from which Baroque Rome appropriated its own version of the past. The style, then, was deliberately simplistic in imitation of the genre of emblems, borrowing a roughness, an “awkward heavy-handedness” that is essential to the allegorical, according to Benjamin.¹ Lauro simply keeps Rome in print rudimentary. After a century of fine Roman printmaking, the images of *Antiquae Urbis Splendor* understandably therefore may come as a disappointment, as if the genre of reconstruction itself had begun to decay. On reconsideration, however, they mark not a decline in printmaking but a solution to the difficult theological maneuver of re-erecting a city that God had destroyed, even a re-erection that was confined to print: The purposefully coarse delineation of the antique models allowed their real Christian successors to surpass them in magnificence. It anchored the pagan monuments to the only possible form in which they morally could exist, namely as sketchy and ephemeral.

In Lauro, one sees the trajectory of a print antiquarian who did not invent the Baroque, naturally, but who invented the antiquity from which it emerged. That is why this book identifies Lauro as the first “Baroque” antiquarian, worth considering not only in his own right but also as an influence on the much better known Kircher who brings Baroque antiquarianism to its apotheosis. In *Latium*, Kircher copies but also transcends Lauro's antiquarian prints. Not only is the artistic quality vastly superior in the reproductions left to Dutch master engravers but also their complexity and visionary scope surpass the early Baroque antiquarian. Kircher renames and invests with Christian references the re-engraving of Lauro's *House of Maecenas*, presented in Chapter 5, adding layer on layer in a thoroughly visualized Baroque archaeology. More importantly, Kircher develops a theory of origin in which even Roman buildings ultimately derive from God. He finds evidence in heavenly mirages rather than on the ground, relying on Jesuits' reports on divine apparitions.

Lauro and Kircher combined, then, outline not so much an architectural history as an architectural metaphysics in which ancient Rome is kept at a perpetual tilting point between antiquity and the apocalypse. Confronting us is a fascinating and contradictory premodern idea of antiquarianism and architectural history that invites further investigation. In the final instance, both Kircher and Lauro are instruments of the Counter-Reformation, they too acting as its missionaries. But whereas others crossed the oceans to far-off continents, they traversed time itself to recruit the ancients.

Although the two protagonists in this story probably never met, they had publishers, collectors, and patrons in common, and they relied on the same antiquarians and historiographers, with Kircher having the added advantage of also relying on Lauro. Borrowing images was merely an outward sign of his dependence, for the transformation of Rome in print that Lauro began, by reinterpreting antiquarian images emblematically, resulted in a Baroque antiquity that Kircher perfected. This book argues that an allegorical reading of the past, as a basic *modus operandi*, unites their efforts on a level that allowed them to bring out the “truths” they found hidden in ancient Rome. From the codes sporadically inserted in Lauro’s reconstructions, allegory seems to embrace antiquity itself in the world of Kircher. The development that goes from Lauro to Kircher, then, is not only one of overlapping careers but also one of a refinement of method – of the development of a particular reconstructive rhetoric.

No clear answer has emerged as to which particular history *Antiquae Urbis Splendor* and *Latium* belong, which has made this study a cross-disciplinary exercise indeed. The large supporting cast shows how this discussion easily branches into a multitude of fields: Publishers, engravers, architects, patrons, collectors, tourists, and guides interact to a degree that is on the verge of transforming the material into a social history of seventeenth-century Rome. However, more specific histories may also be distilled. The subtly differentiated types of benefactors make antiquity in the Baroque a “patron’s past” that in terms of print production prompted dedications, rededications, and also reinterpretations of monuments in publications that flaunted captivating designs at the cost of archaeological accuracy. The Farnese, Borghese, Barberini, and Chigi initiated building projects, held collections, and hosted courts that helped Lauro and Kircher realize their particular vision of ancient Rome. An uncannily detailed portrait of a sponsored past emerged with the investigation into the making of *Antiquae Urbis Splendor* in Chapter 2; it revealed how the forging of printed Rome depended less on professional qualifications than on personal contacts, from the duke of Savoy to the Swiss Guard Alto.

This book is also a thinly guised history of architecture in the Baroque. All six chapters point to the inevitable conclusion that reconstructions in print influenced – and indeed formulated – seventeenth-century architecture and architectural discourse. Borromini, Cortona, and Bernini extracted from

Lauro's compendium elements for use in their own projects, as did Fischer von Erlach and other northern European architects. The capriciousness so often associated with the Baroque shows at a closer look to be a careful retracing of models in print. With Kircher the prospect of building crept into the design itself, prompting him and his engraver to turn "Maecenas's villa" into a form that would appeal to possible patrons. Roman Baroque architecture not only reflected their ancient counterparts reconstructed in prints – villas, palaces, and shrines – but also was to some extent conditioned by them.

Although reconstructions of Rome invite excursions into the history of print, antiquarianism, and architecture, their subject has, on the deepest level, been the history of history itself. Reconstructions offer a conceptual tool – a methodology even – to grasp the doubly exposed history at work. The book's attempt to understand the Baroque's *own* understanding of the past has used reconstructions as a point of access. The book, then, obviously forms a chapter in the history of reconstructive methodology, but as the question has been throughout, which chapter? Renaissance and Baroque Rome never rebuilt lost monuments with the precision of, say, a post-Cold War Berlin or Dresden. A "re-naissance" building practice from Brunelleschi onward reintroduced ideals and even motifs of the ancients, but seldom actual buildings, which would violate the integrity of architects, then like now, and propagate functions and rituals at odds with new customs. The exact and systematic retrieval of the past, element by element, is arguably a historicist approach, informed by a post-Hegelian view of history that allowed periods and their specific traits to be paraded in succession – as they were in one of the nineteenth-century's favorite institutions, the museum. At that point, to quote Lowenthal, "It is no longer the presence of the past that speaks to us, but its pastness."²

The past is indeed unstable. The form of the past throughout history amounts to a historiography of time dealt with by Reinhart Koselleck, David Wilcox, and others. Koselleck argues that antiquity to an early seventeenth-century mind consisted of several coexisting narratives, not yet absorbed into an abstracted "history in and for itself," which Koselleck identifies as a particular post-Enlightenment construction.³ The past existed before history, in other words. But what kind of past would that be? The idea of the past makes little sense if not as a stretch behind us on the timeline, and yet we have seen how simple chronologies fail to account for the complex temporality exhibited in seventeenth-century printed reconstructions, a temporality that redeems their anachronisms. The discussion therefore has repeatedly returned to the task of formulating a past beyond time that does justice to the symbolically charged *Roma antica* in the prints of Lauro and Kircher.

I have daringly suggested that the graphic medium allowed print antiquarians not only to illustrate history but at a basic level also to structure the conception of it. The printed reconstructions' arresting display of

cross-temporal references is somehow itself a model of historical thinking. What a reconstruction does is to *materialize* the division of time in a present and a past, forcing the maker to construe from what remains that which no longer exists in a meaningful compromise between the lost and the familiar. The chapters have proposed various terms to describe how monuments in print not only visualize but also redistribute the past. Whether they are seen to “regenerate,” “reconstruct,” or “pre-convert” – whether they were called “prototypes” or “mirrors” (*specula*) – these are all terms that express an ambiguity about when in time the monument in question belongs. They are terms that presuppose a shadowy double, coming either before or after – for the chronology is not always easy to establish: Which building comes first and may pose as an original in examples such as Lauro’s where a vanished Jupiter temple is modeled on an unfinished S. Peter’s?

If the antagonist in this story seems to have been conventional linear time, it is because it is against such a notion that various less distinct manifestations of temporality can be highlighted. Ideas of development and progression formed in the last two hundred years set up a barrier not so much between the present and the past as between the pasts themselves. The seventeenth century sorted previous epochs according to fundamentally different criteria than those we use to sort the Baroque. The discontinuity in historical understanding runs so deep that a rupture opens not only between epochs, as if the problem was one of a mere transition, but also between the notions of time itself.

Time might also be a place, at least in Rome. The eternal city embodies history in a quite material sense, with its successive pasts stacked tangibly beneath and within existing structures, “all encamped about us,” as Goethe observed.⁴ In the seventeenth century the mass of vestiges presented an antiquity that through its sheer presence was still very much contemporary – an alluring, albeit somewhat elusively located, last *regio* of Rome. The past as a place that one may enter is duly reflected in *Antiquae Urbis Splendor* where modern tourists pop in and out of the reconstructed capital, as if crossing the boundaries of time was a matter of mere geography. Likewise Cardinal Barberini and his court, in Kircher’s *Latium* representation, already seem to inhabit an ancient villa that in fact had long vanished.

But this study has revealed an antiquity that existed also beyond both time and place. Flavio Biondo in the fifteenth century already held that the objective of antiquarian studies was to confirm Rome as the *imago omnis virtutis* – the image of all virtue.⁵ A significant but intangible side to the study of antiquity since the Renaissance has been the conviction that ancient models were transmitted and attained less by imitation of form than by a spontaneous sharing in the virtues of the ancients, as if architectural history unfolded by an inner law of ethics. In the Baroque age these moral undercurrents in the restitution of the antique transformed into a mighty and inevitable force of Christian providence.

Reconstructions succinctly illustrate the idea of overlapping time sequences – of a past that held in store the present’s deeper meaning. To find parallels in antiquity to contemporary building projects became the mission of the early modern antiquarian. A reconstruction understood in terms of Lauro and Kircher is a marriage between two realities – one present and under construction, the other lost but with the keys to a powerful plot. In this picture, the ruin would only be in the way, and an investigation into a monument’s true form would be a digression. In a progression of history in which the past constantly intervenes as a present in disguise, the act of recovery takes a more legitimate form as disclosure than as excavation, aimed to lift the veil of Rome’s mere forms and reveal its true significance in God’s scheme of things.

The demand for a more rigorous method in the study of antiquity, as well as a gradually altered conception of history itself, undermined the providential scheme that long had tied the events of the world to a Christian narrative. The rise of modern historiography in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries found new models in which to inscribe time’s unfolding.⁶ Only when the past no longer is believed to hold predictions of the future does it become truly historical. The history that Lauro and Kircher propagated is still very much a providential history. To them, events unfold according to a divine plan that remains unknown to man except when occasionally disclosed as cryptic messages. What is the function, or indeed use, of pagan Rome in this thoroughly Christianized world history that runs from Creation to Judgment Day? And why did God even allow the heathen culture to exist? Rome’s obvious function in Christian texts, and subsequently also in print, was as a collection of predictions and prefigurations. In this form antiquity would never recede into a finite past because it held the draft of events that were in the process of unfolding. The Roman period is simply the present played out as a forewarning. The antiquarian’s role in this picture is to retrieve from the classical legacy its predictions; to interpret architecture, rituals, and episodes in light of the impending Christian triumph; and to recast the findings as *exempla* both for good and for worse. With Judgment Day yet to come, and the final verdict yet to be passed on ancients and moderns alike, both Lauro and Kircher in some sense still inhabited the antiquity they resurrected. From their perspective, history had not yet confined Rome to the “past” nor labeled the monuments they reconstructed as “ancient.”

